



A Union of Professionals

AFT Healthcare 

Testimony of

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Public Health Committee

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SB 855 An Act Concerning Reports of Nurse Staffing Levels

Good afternoon Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Donna Maronde and I am the President of the University Health Professionals Local 3837, which represents 2,600 healthcare professionals including RN's, PA's APRN's, Lab Technologists, Radiologic Technologists and many other ancillary support service staff, which are all part of the direct care that our patients receive at the UCONN John Dempsey Hospital.

I am speaking in support of SB 855 - An Act Concerning Reports of Nurse Staffing Levels. We have a Joint Nurse Staffing Committee at Dempsey, which unfortunately has been ineffective and lacks follow through. This bill would in fact ensure that reporting to DPH would guarantee prospective staffing for our patients and not "bottom line" staffing plans that we are now enduring. Many of the institutions' staffing plans do not have any relief for the "surges" that we have experienced over these last few months.

We have raised concerns over patient acuity and the amount of direct patient care that we feel is needed, only to find that much of the "real numbers of staff" on duty are RN's performing administrative functions, not actual patient care. Mandating the reporting of planned vs. actual is one way to understand what skill mix is being scheduled vs. used. The primary responsibility falls on the shoulders of the nurses who are forced to accept patients, thereby putting their licenses on the line when they are being stretched too thin and mandated to do additional hours on top of their 12 hour shifts.

I ask that you require compliance through reporting and that you give DPH the necessary clout to enforce this statute as written. Only with input and accurate reporting will the accountability be there to safeguard the public at all of our acute care hospitals. WE are all at risk if a written certification plan is not developed to force hospitals to comply. This will enhance patient care and the level of services that our staff seek to render to all.

The required reporting to DPH needs to be mandatory and uniform, so that the public can understand where the most vulnerable will receive the quality care that they clearly need and deserve. Please don't let a sentinel event for you or anyone else's family be the trigger to fix what we already know is a problem.

Thank you for your consideration of this legislation.